

Message Text

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53

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-13 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 EB-11 COME-00 RSR-01 /153 W

----- 116826

P R 031210Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1050

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY FORT LAMY

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE YAOUNDE 2320

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CM

SUBJECT: CAMEROON WITHDRAWAL FROM OCAM

1. YAOUNDE RADIO CARRIED FIRST REPORT AFTERNOON JULY 2 OF CAMEROON'S WITHDRAWAL FROM OCAM. RADIO CITED PRESIDENT AHIDJO'S JULY 1 PRESS INTERVIEW IN DAKAR WITH AFP AND LEMONDE CORRESPONDENTS. QUOTED PRESIDENT AS SAYING THAT OCAM WAS NEITHER AFRICAN (I.E., ALL-AFRICAN) NOR REGIONAL NOR SUB-REGIONAL GROUP AND THUS WAS ANACHRONISM. ALSO REPORTED HIS STATEMENT
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THAT CAMEROON NOW READY TO START NEGOTIATIONS ON REVISION OF

FRENCH ACCORDS.

2. NEWS OF WITHDRAWAL CAME AS SURPRISE TO LOCAL OBSERVERS. CAMEROON'S GENERAL INDIFFERENCE TO OCAM HAS BEEN FAIRLY EVIDENT FOR SOME TIME BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO HINT THAT WITHDRAWAL UNDER CONSIDERATION.

3. AMBASSADOR QUERIED MINISTER OF STATE BIYA AFTERNOON JULY 2 ON WITHDRAWAL. HE THREW LITTLE LIGHT ON DECISION OTHER THAN TO SAY OCAM HAD BEEN A DISAPPOINTMENT. IT HAD BEEN VIEWED AS A POTENTIAL MECHANISM FOR CLOSER ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN MEMBERS BUT MEMBERSHIP WAS TOO DISPARATE. MOREOVER CAMEROON AS AN ANGLOPHONE AS WELL AS A FRANCOPHONE COUNTRY DID NOT FEEL COMPLETELY COMFORTABLE IN OCAM. HE ADDED THAT CAMEROON WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION WERE HEADQUARTERS TO REMAIN BUT HE DOUBTED THAT OTHER MEMBERS WOULD FIND THIS REASONABLE. IT WAS CERTAINLY NOT IN THE PRESIDENT'S STYLE, HE STATED, TO PUSH OCAM OUT. CAMEROON FOUND SOME OF THE OCAM TECHNICAL AGENCIES USEFUL AND WOULD PROBABLY BE PREPARED TO STAY IN THEM. THIS MATTER NOW UNDER STUDY. HE IMPLIED CAMEROON COULD MANAGE QUITE WELL WITHOUT PARTICIPATION.

4. THE APOSTOLIC PRONUNCIO INFORMED AMBASSADOR THAT DURING HIS FAREWELL CALL LAST WEEK ON FONMIN EFON HE HAD VENTURED PERSONAL VIEW THAT OCAM SERVED LITTLE PURPOSE. EFON HAD THEREUPON MADE A STIRRING DEFENSE OF OCAM AND ITS USEFULNESS TO CAMEROON. (COMMENT: IT WOULD BE QUITE IN KEEPING WITH AHIDJO'S STYLE FOR FONMIN TO BE UNAWARE THAT WITHDRAWAL FROM OCAM UNDER CONSIDERATION.)

5. FRENCH PROFESS THAT DECISION TOOK THEM BY SURPRISE ALTHOUGH THEY FULLY AWARE OF AHIDJO'S LONGSTANDING DISENCHANTMENT WITH ORGANIZATION.

6. COMMENT: WITHDRAWAL FROM OCAM SEEMS TO BE ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF A SITUATION IN WHICH AHIDJO HAS SEEN HANDWRITING ON WALL AND HAS DECIDED TO TURN IT TO HIS ADVANTAGE, FROM STANDPOINT HIS IMAGE IN AFRICA AND INTERNALLY, BY GETTING VANGUARD, RATHER THAN WAITING WITH OTHER OCAM MEMBERS FOR ORGANIZATIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LIKELY DEMISE. OCAM'S IDENTIFICATION WITH FRANCE GIVES GURC DECISION THE AURA OF A FURTHER DEMONSTRATION OF CAMEROONIAN INDEPENDENCE FROM FORMER COLONIAL POWER WHOSE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCE IS BUTT OF MUTED BUT EVER-PRESENT CRITICISM. WITHDRAWAL LIKELY BE ESPECIALLY WELCOMED BY ANGLOPHONE CAMEROONIANS.
MOORE

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